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Administrative, financial and institutional matters
Budgetary matters

Update on possible approaches to prioritization and budgetary implications of decisions of the governing bodies and conclusions of the subsidiary bodies

Report by the secretariat

Summary

This document provides updated information on possible approaches to prioritization and budgetary implications of decisions of the governing bodies and conclusions of the subsidiary taking into account comments made by Parties at informal group meetings on budgetary matters at the first part of the forty-eighth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation.

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I. Introduction

1. The Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), at the first part of its forty-eighth session, took note of the information contained in document FCCC/SBI/2018/INF.2 on possible approaches to prioritization and budgetary implications of decisions of the governing bodies and conclusions of the subsidiary bodies. It requested the secretariat to update the document, taking into account the comments made by Parties at informal group meetings at SBI 48.1, for consideration at SBI 49.[1]

2. Document FCCC/SBI/2018/INF.2 presented the information in two parts:

(a) The first part provided three possible approaches to prioritization, namely ranking activities and mandates, adopting practices from other United Nations organizations, and prioritizing mandates on the basis of when they were issued;

(b) The second part provided three options for managing the budgetary implications of decisions of the governing bodies and conclusions of the subsidiary bodies, namely the secretariat providing at each session a simple one-page list of standard cost information for typical activities, providing as soon as possible information on budgetary implications for draft texts, or providing before their adoption information on the budgetary implications of draft decisions and conclusions.

3. This document provides updated information on possible approaches to prioritization (chapter II) and budgetary implications of decisions of the governing bodies and conclusions of the subsidiary bodies (chapter III).

II. Possible approaches to prioritization

4. At SBI 48.1, Parties acknowledged that prioritizing mandates is a complex task and that there is no simple mechanism for establishing prioritization criteria agreed upon by all Parties.

5. Given the difficulty of unanimously agreeing on a clear prioritization of mandated activities, the secretariat is currently undertaking analytical work to map its activities and their underlying mandates. The secretariat is also reviewing the synergy of its activities with a view to reducing redundancies and increasing cost efficiency.

6. Future opportunities for the secretariat to streamline its work may arise from decisions taken at the twenty-fourth and future sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP) on the design of the organizational architecture for the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

7. The results of the efforts outlined above, including any decisions taken at COP 24, will inform the development of specific options for prioritization and the preparation of the secretariat's programme budget for 2020–2021.

III. Budgetary implications of decisions of the governing bodies and conclusions of the subsidiary bodies

8. With regard to enhancing the transparency of the cost of secretariat activities, Parties considered two matters: the provision of a standard cost list, and the timing of the provision of information on budgetary implications.

9. Providing more information on the cost of activities in advance would enable Parties to take that information into account when making decisions on proposed activities and new mandates; serve to clarify, through estimated financial information, the scale and scope of proposed activities; and facilitate better analysis of activities in advance of decision-making.

10. Secretariat staff supporting Parties in their consideration of agenda items at sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies are required as per internal procedures to identify the budgetary implications of draft decisions and conclusions of the governing bodies and draft

[1] FCCC/SBI/2018/9, paragraphs 153 and 155.

conclusions of the subsidiary bodies as early as possible and to inform the chairs of the corresponding in-session informal groups of the availability of relevant information. The chairs decide when during the negotiations to share the available information with their group. They are encouraged to share the information early and no later than at the last meeting of the group. Furthermore, at the last plenary meeting of each session of a governing or subsidiary body, the secretariat provides an oral summary report on the budgetary implications of decisions and conclusions adopted at the session.

11. Parties could request the secretariat to provide budgetary cost implications in pre-session documents if they include suggestions for new mandates to the secretariat and if sufficient information is available on the details of the proposed activities.

12. Upon Parties' request, the secretariat can provide a one-page list detailing the standard cost of typical activities such as organizing workshops and meetings, preparing papers, conducting reviews and developing platforms. Some such information, for example on the standard cost of participation in meetings held in Bonn versus those held elsewhere, is currently provided in the biennial programme budget documents.

IV. Conclusions

13. The secretariat will follow the guidance of the SBI on possible approaches to prioritizing mandated activities and will continue efforts to make the allocation of resources clearer and more transparent.

14. Considering the options provided thus far for managing the budgetary implications of the decisions and conclusions of the governing bodies and conclusions of the subsidiary bodies, Parties may wish to request the secretariat to provide such information as may be required to ensure that the budgetary implications of decisions and conclusions, including those proposed in pre-session documents, can be taken into account in decision-making.

15. The secretariat will continue to review its mandates and activities with a view to ensuring their relevance and efficiency and would welcome any further guidance from Parties.